3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

793 Horse Capture, the brother of Thick and the Assiniboine woman, Coming Day, who was still living—who had married Horse Capture and in her latter days had come to realize her duties toward the Pipe,—were ritually inaugurated as Pipe keeper and Pipe woman by Lame Bull. Then Coming Day died, as did also in 1908 Lame Bull, and Horse Capture was left alone with the Pipe. He married again and The Boy's mother, who had earlier been Pipe woman, instructed Horse Capture's second wife in her ritual duties. Horse Capture was the last ritual keeper of the Pipe. When Horse Capture died, his widow took the Pipe over. Thick wanted to bury the Pipe with Horse Capture, but was dissuaded from doing so, and agreed to keep it. Later Horse Capture's widow, who lived successively with Thick's family, the Birdtail family, and The Boy's family, willed the Pipe to The Boy, to dispose of it as he saw fit. On her death, The Boy wanted to take it over but his wife as a Catholic objected. The Boy finally got [795] her consent on the ground that "we are both Catholics; I want to keep the Pipe as a keepsake, not to pray to as it used to be prayed to," but it was arranged that the Pipe would remain in the keeping of Thick (married to The Boy's sister) until The Boy and his wife were ready to take it.

[755] The last ritual opening of the Pipe bundle occurred in 1937 as a prayer for cure, when Joe Assiniboine's small son was affected with bad sores on his face. The rite was only partially and negligently carried out at the time. The final formal uncovering of the Pipe took place on February 6, 1946, after the return of [727] the Gros Ventre members of the armed forces from World War II. On this occasion the full rite, as far as recalled, was enacted, and the Pipe and Pipe bundle given a thorough cleaning and renovating. The bundle with the Pipe is now (1955) carefully kept at The Boy's ranch at Lodge Pole.

The elective system rather than the voluntary vow was the more common one. Under this system, where the actual keeper decided to give up and transfer the Flat Pipe, he would confidentially summon the surviving ex-keepers and ex-co-keepers (not the other wives) of both the Flat and Feathered Pipes to come secretly without a word to anybody, to meet at his lodge,

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13.

ceticism" expected of the keeper, his status as one set apart from his fellows, and his political and civil role in the Gros Ventre theocracy. We shall classify and treat them in this order, although some of them do not fit too neatly into any one of the five or six categories, and some straddle two or more of them. Incidentally, in many cases these refer to the co-keeper as well, although our field notes mention only the keeper.

The keeper and co-keeper of the Flat Pipe held a very sacred office of great eminence, and their persons and everything on or about them were considered holy. They themselves were expected always to behave in a dignified manner becoming their exalted and sacred position, and others were obliged to show them due respect.

The keeper and co-keeper were not permitted "to do foolish things like other people." They could not, for instance, take part in gossip or other petty meanness. They were obligated as well to many ethical, "ascetic" and ritual observances to be described presently.

Marked respect was due them from their fellow-tribesmen. As The Boy put it, the Gros Ventres, now all Catholics, "had just the same great respect for the keeper and his wife as they now have for the priests and nuns."

People had to keep their distance from the keeper and co-keeper, and could not sit close to them, or touch, grab or wrestle with them. Apparently, however, they could shake hands with them. If the keeper asked anyone to hand him something, the object had to be passed by hand, not thrown to him; if it were thrown toward the keeper on the ground and he had to pick it up, some accident would befall either the keeper or the thrower.

If anyone stepped over the outstretched feet or legs of the sitting keeper or co-keeper, the guilty party would at once fall in a fit, or get cramps and could be cured only by the offended keeper or co-keeper. Likewise, if the keeper, intentionally or unintentionally, stepped over the outstretched legs of a sitting person, the person would get fits or cramps and could be cured only by the keeper.

If the keeper or an ex-keeper had the Flat Pipe or even a com-

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

782 *796 [262] [795]

Hunters returning from a successful buffalo chase would select pieces of kidney (a special delicacy) and ribs, and put them on top of the Pipe bundle. In recent times, money offerings occur. Offerings for the Pipe have become increasingly infrequent; offerings are now usually made instead by the Gros Ventres, all of whom are Catholics, to the Mission Church or at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Little Rockies on the Mission grounds.

A promise or vow to cover the Pipe, made silently or aloud, would be worded, "I vow to cover (or wrap) the Flat Pipe," rather than "I vow to give something to the Flat Pipe."

During our field work in 1940, when Coming Daylight was telling among other things what she knew of the Flat Pipe and its ritual, one evening (Aug. 16) she heard that her grandchild was seriously ill. Thereupon she went outside a little distance and holding both arms up, palms out, looking up and facing toward where the Flat Pipe was she spoke and prayed: "I am telling about you. I am telling everything straight. I suppose you hear everything, and must know that I am telling everything straight. I am telling the truth and nothing but the truth. Look at me. Have pity on me and upon all the rest of the people. Take away all bad things that go around here on earth. Have pity so my grandchild may get well. I promise to put a robe on you. I hear you value black more than anything, and that is what I shall get you. I hear my grandchild though still sick is better." In this case, as Coming Daylight explained, she was "talking right to the Pipe."

In a long discussion, a couple of days later (Aug. 20, 1940), with The Boy, he emphasized that while a person covering the Flat Pipe had great reverence for it and would address it by its own two names, Flat Pipe and Little Turtle, the Pipe itself was only a medium by which the Supreme Being was petitioned or thanked. A man, for instance, in sudden imminent danger would perhaps, praying in his heart and mind, mention only the Pipe, but he would know what the Pipe represented, namely, only a powerful means used so that his prayer would be hearkened to by the Supreme Being. We may add incidentally that mention in the course of this discussion of the Sinkaetk custom of praying to the sweat-lodge caused hearty laughter by The Boy and Thomas Main.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

in dried pounded meat, I was not allowed to eat the meat. If a coyote or wolf were killed, I was not supposed to touch it. These were the only two prohibitions I was under. 793 784

"If anybody vowed to be painted by the keeper, I would be present at the rite next to my mother and sit there through the ceremony. 793

"Whenever while I was Pipe child I got sick my father would put pine needles on me, and then he would take down the bundle and put it on my parents' bed, and would say to me: 'Put your arms around your brother [the Pipe] and pray to your brother so you may get well.' The Pipe keeper and his wife claim the Feathered Pipe as their son and tell their children that the Pipe is their brother. When I put my arms around the Pipe I was told to say to the Pipe: 'My dear brother, have pity on me, that I may get well of my illness.' [D55]

"Of course the Pipe was not human but because I was a baby when my father got it I grew up with it and thought just as much of it as of my own blood relatives. When my father transferred the Pipe to Sitting High I was outside playing. When I was coming home I saw the bundle at Sitting High's door, and when I saw it I started to cry, and when I saw my father I said to him: 'Why did you give my Pipe away?' It was just like a person leaving. I was lonesome for it, and felt just as if I had lost a relative or friend. And all through my life I have felt the same toward it. All through my life I have made it a point to be present at any Feathered Pipe ceremony. And whenever I went to any ceremony, I would bring something for it. Since I joined the Catholic Church I stopped doing this, but even now I feel: 'It's all alone. I pity it.' [795]

"When while I was Pipe child I had been out playing and in the evening would come home and see the Pipe bundle over the door, I would stand and look at it a long time and would say: 'Feathered Pipe, I am going into our lodge now.' Once when I was sitting on the bed in the lodge I got to thinking, and all the folks were there, and I said: 'Feathered Pipe, my dear brother, look down on me and watch over me.' I was not told to say this, and I do not know what made me say this prayer to the Feathered Pipe. [782]

"My father used to tell me: 'This Pipe was given by the Su-

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

514 country do what I did. When buffalo go to drink, Indians just
522 shoot them. I was just re-enacting this. What I did was proper.'
*796 To this the husband replied: 'My elder brother, that's true.'

"When the people heard the laughing, they came flocking around. The other Blood was still laughing, in fact was in a laughing spell. His relatives carried him out and took him home and there dashed water on him and revived him."

Peyote Cult and Ghost Dance

668 What little we were able to gather on the peyote cult and Ghost
●795 Dance among the Gros Ventres, is here presented.

Peyotism is entirely lacking among the present-day Gros Ventres and appears never to have gained a foothold among them in the past. Some individuals, we were told by The Boy and Thick, had tried to introduce it, but without success as the Gros Ventres were "a little afraid of it." The fact that the Gros Ventres have been under fairly intensive Catholic missionary influence since the middle 1880's may partly account for the resistance.[43] Some young Gros Ventres, who were on a visit to the Crows, were invited to take part in Peyote observances, but declined.

On the fortunes of the Ghost Dance among the Gros Ventres, our chief informants were Cora Chandler and her husband Al Chandler, Coming Daylight, The Boy, Thick, Charles Buckman and Thomas Main. Singer had joined the movement but though perfectly willing to speak freely about other subjects was somewhat reluctant to talk about this one. Our other informants had not joined the Ghost Dance, but Cora Chandler's people "were strong for it." Coming Daylight was, as will be explained, in close contact with certain phases of it, and The Boy had been present as a spectator at many Ghost Dance gatherings.

[177] The Ghost Dance was called among the Gros Ventres, not "Ghost Dance," but "Little Round Dances." It was first introduced among them in 1891 by a Gros Ventre from the Hays area who had lived among the Arapaho of Wyoming a number of years, had

[43] Coming Daylight came in contact with the Peyote Cult on a visit some years ago to Oklahoma, but, she remarked, "the Catholic Indians in Oklahoma were against peyote."

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

attended the Ghost Dance there, and had returned to Hays in that year. As introducer and leader of the cult he preached wa:hatcan (lit. "reunion of all together," cf. wahanichina "unite" [Sifton]), signifying the rising of the dead Indians either in the near future or at the end of the world, and predicted the return of the buffalo, and into his message wove something of both Christ and the Flat Pipe. Big gatherings of Gros Ventres listened to him. Some few became converts, but most remained spectators and hearers only and declined to join. Further, the Gros Ventres did not join at all in the Ghost Dance political uprising. They had previously given their word not to go to war with the whites. The movement lasted just two years and then died out.[44]

The factors accounting for the resistance to and decline of the Ghost Dance among the Gros Ventres were, according to The Boy and Charles Buckman, the following. The older men and women did not believe Returns-to-war and the other promoters because "they had to be shown, and they felt that it was impossible for the dead, to rise again and for the buffalo to come back." The younger fellows, of the age of The Boy and Charles Buckman at the time, that is, around twenty years, did not believe because "the younger generation was then going to the Catholic missionaries and had learned different." Moreover, in 1893, some Wyoming Arapaho visited Hays and from them the Gros Ventres found that Returns-to-war had "exaggerated the story," so they all quit the Ghost Dance.

From Cora Chandler, Coming Daylight and Al Chandler we gathered the following information that sheds additional light on the rise of the Gros Ventre Ghost Dance and especially on the causes believed to have led to its rejection and decline.

During the rites, there would be round dances; the dancers would be painted after which they would sing and sing; the songs

[44] Mooney, 1896, p. 817 in his exhaustive study of the situation states that a Gros Ventre had been visiting in 1889 among the Arapaho and "heard the story and brought back the wonderful news to the Gros Ventres and Assiniboine of Fort Belknap, but although his account was received by some with unquestioning faith, the excitement had in it nothing of a dangerous character."

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957 -
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

668
795

themselves were very lively ones; preaching of the content of the Ghost Dance message was a prominent feature.

Among those who took over leadership in the movement, along with Returns-to-war, was an outstanding medicine man who died a Catholic many years later, but who at the time of the Ghost Dance movement was bitterly anti-Catholic.

For one Ghost Dance gathering on a certain moonlight night, he had called the people to his place outside and a great many came, among them Coming Daylight and Cora Chandler's father's brother, Black Wolf, who was "one of the strong believers." After some singing and dancing, the leader said: "Wait, I am going out on that little hill over there. You all watch. I will stand there. When you see little sparks you will know the spirit has come." So he went up on the hill alone while the people stayed behind, singing, dancing and watching. Coming Daylight watched him and saw him "take a lot of matches, wet them so that they glowed in the dark, and hold his hands so that those dancing saw this fire glow." The people rushed over to him, glad that the spirit had come. The leader then took them back to the spot where they had been dancing and said to them: "Wait until tomorrow, and I will tell you what the spirit told me."

Each one who joined the Ghost Dance was supposed to have a feather of eagle down. The next morning, the leader told Black Wolf: "Your (deceased) son says you should go to where he is buried and he will bring you a feather." In the course of this day Coming Daylight happened to go over to the leader's house and there she found him sitting with all kinds of feathers around him and fixing one especially. She observed it closely to be sure she would recognize it if she should see it again. When she went back to her lodge, she said to her husband, Little Man, "That crazy thing is still fixing feathers. He is certainly up to something." She told her husband what she had seen and said: "I think he must be up to something crazy."

So when night came, Black Wolf and his wife went up to their son's grave, out on the hills near Old Hays. Sure enough there on the grave was a stick with eagle down on it. They were glad, for they thought their son's spirit had brought it to them.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

and they went back to their house where a crowd was waiting to see if the feather would really be found as the leader had predicted. The leader, Coming Daylight, and her husband Little Man, were in the crowd. The leader took the feathered stick and handed it to Coming Daylight, who said right out: "Oh, that is the very same one I saw him fixing. . . . How could a ghost hand fix these feathers the way they are fixed?"

Notwithstanding this public exposure, the leader [no doubt later and privately] told Black Wolf's wife that because she had gotten this feather from the dead she could get anything she wanted, but that he (the leader) would have to have [sexual intercourse with] her first. She told her husband and "when he found out it was a trick, he sure was mad and he went over and was going to murder that man."

Cora Chandler added that a lot of women were gotten through this trick, that there were many such Ghost Dance bosses, or leaders, and that they used to get cattle, horses, and anything they wanted, including the women.

Singer said that although she joined the Ghost Dance, she did not have to pay anything, but that her husband, when they brought him a message from one of his dead relatives, cried and gave what they asked, a buckskin horse, to the old woman boss. "They used to have women bosses as well as men bosses in the Ghost Dance."

Returns-to-war once came to Coming Daylight's husband, Little Man, and told him: "Your young brother, who got killed in the war, wants a horse, bridle and saddle." Little Man, who was a good deal of a skeptic in things religious, declined with the retort: "What is a ghost going to do with a horse and saddle?"

According to Al Chandler, "Jack Wilson got away with all kinds of things. Before he died be brought his son here to Hays and his son eloped with one girl, and that cooked his goose. They found out he was a fraud." According to Coming Daylight, "he [Jack Wilson] had a lot of women through that [the Ghost Dance]. He would choose the prettiest and best looking woman to make his smudge for him. He would have a little hut." At this point in the conversation, Singer broke in and would not let Coming Daylight continue along this line. We have come across no other

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

668
.745

record of the original Jack Wilson (Wovoka) visiting the Gros Ventres. Could the Jack Wilson above mentioned be some other Indian who was an impostor or one who in good faith took Wovoka's white-man's name?

In addition, the causes listed by The Boy and Thick for the failure of the Ghost Dance to take real root among the Gros Ventre, the chicanery, racketeering and sexual episodes, attributed by many of the Gros Ventres to the leaders of the movement, must have contributed appreciably to the same result.

At any rate, the movement lasted only two years, 1891-1893, and appears to have left no permanent impression on Gros Ventre life. At or shortly after these dates, however the modern non-gambling hand game was introduced from Ghost Dance sources.

[M7
524]

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

755 [764] there and saw two fresh graves. They dig a hole about three or four feet deep and put sticks across, cover that with canvas and cover the canvas with dirt. I laid down on one of the graves and that is where they found me. When I did not come back my father started looking for me. I was just like dead and they got an old medicine man to work on me, for at that time my adopted father, Little Man, had not yet gotten doctoring power.

"When I woke up, my father, my stepfather (the man married to my real mother), a woman and the old doctor, Black Bird, were there in this big lodge. I did not know what had happened to me but when I woke up I saw old Black Bird sitting by me. He had a china saucer with medicine in it and with four little brass bells [sic] in the medicine. He told me to drink up the medicine. I took the medicine but tried to balk at the bells. But the old man said: 'No, no drink the bells and all. The bells will be your protection. You will never get sick and ghosts will no longer be able to harm you. You could go to sleep with them and sit up with them [without harm to you from them]."

In a long narrative of a battle between the Gros Ventres and the Crow, The Boy described, very briefly, the manner in which one of the Gros Ventres was cured. After the fighting was over this man was found unconscious, bleeding from a wound in the arm. One of the Gros Ventres knew how to staunch the flow of blood He had an otter-skin with medicine tied on the nose thereof. With this he treated the wounded man's arm. The flow of blood stopped at once and the man regained consciousness. A travois was made and they had the man's relatives haul him back to the main camp on it.

756 A number of other individuals with doctoring power were mentioned by name at various times by our informants—Sleeping Bear, He Steals, Bill Jones, Ragged Robe (d. about 1935), Otter Robe, Joe Assiniboine—but we obtained no information on their curing procedures. We knew Joe Assiniboine, who alone of the [795] surviving Gros Ventres refused to the last to become a Catholic and who died only recently in 1942 or 1943, but unfortunately, though not patently unfriendly to us, was consistently reluctant to give information.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

band, Little Man; Drops In The Fire, a horse for curing Crow Bull; Stiffarm, lots of things, horses and so forth, including "one lovely mare," for treating—unsuccessfully—Little Man. Good Singer received "horses, blankets and such things," for curing Singer herself. Bull Lodge was given "the best horses" for treating Al Chandler's uncle. All the foregoing payments were for cases of serious illness. Mae Main stated that a person who wanted to procure a certain contraceptive root would have to "pay a big price for this, sometimes two or three horses."

Sometimes, how commonly or rarely it is hard to say, a medicine man would stipulate sex relations as his payment or part thereof. Cora Chandler had heard "that some medicine men take women afterwards as part of the payment for curing." "This," she explained, "is why Coming Daylight was afraid of that medicine man when he was stark naked," having disrobed before starting to treat her (supra, p. 338). "Occasionally," Thomas Main had heard, "in very serious circumstances a man, to save the life of a brother or of someone dear to him, would pay the fee of giving his wife [allowing the doctor sex relations with her]."

The relative decline of native doctoring is due in part to the influence of the missionaries and of the civil authorities, in part no doubt to educational and other accultural factors. All the Gros Ventres today are members of the Catholic Church. "Joe Assiniboine," said Coming Daylight, "a good medicine man, still living [in 1940: he died in 1942 or 1943], never joined the Church; joining would take his power away from him." Stiffarm, one of the last of the great doctors, who died in 1932, on becoming a Catholic and later a catechist, is reported by one informant to have renounced his doctoring powers. One reason Coming Daylight gave for not accepting doctoring power herself was, "my children were all Catholics and I joined the Church and I will be a good Catholic till I die." Little Man, Al Chandler's adopted father, wanted to pass on some of his curing power to him, but Al did not want it, because, he said, he was afraid he would "poison someone" but also on account of the Catholic Church. . . . "The Catholics didn't want you to do such things."